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Groundbreaking Archaeology



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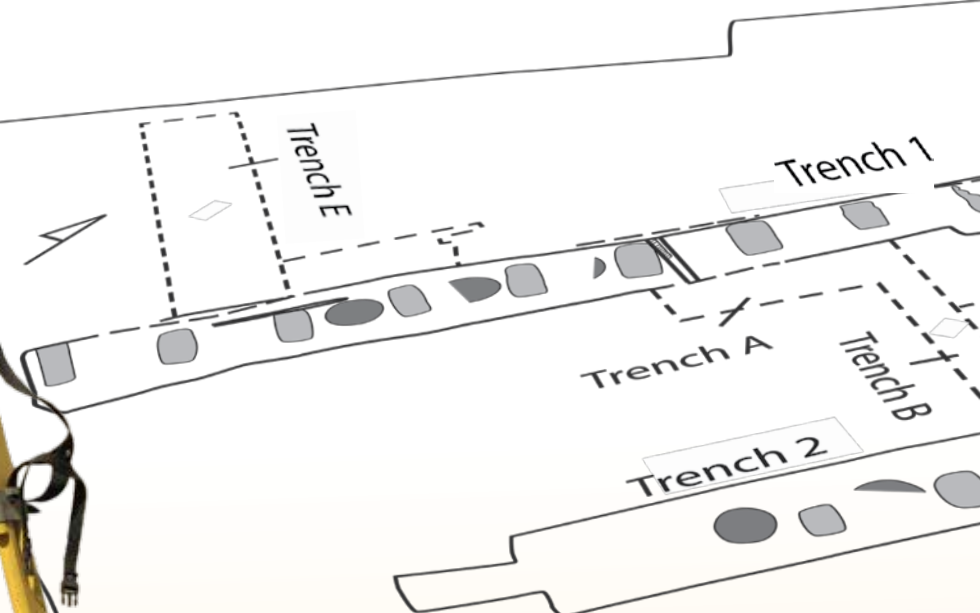
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Real World Rescue Dig: AERA Fields the SAFS in Luxor!

Conservator Lamia el-Hadidy worked with 65 team members of the Salvage Archaeology Field School to save a rich archaeological record in Old Luxor.

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Real World Rescue Dig: AERA Fields the SAFS



SCA Supervisor and Surveyor Mohammed Abd El-Basit, graduate of the Advanced Field School, surveyed and plotted the map of the trenches in the KIW site. (Photo by Mark Lehner)

Yukinori Kawae



SAFS Supervisor and Ceramicist Mohamed Aly Abd el-Hakim

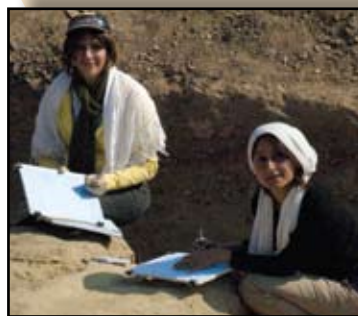
SAFS Photographer and Illustrator Yaser Mahmoud Hossein



Mark Lehner



Yukinori Kawae



Mark Lehner

SAFS student Nagwan Fayez and Nora Shalaby look up from their work in Trench 2.

View to the northeast, looking down Trench 2 to the eastern end of Operation C.

SAFS Supervisor Ahmed el-Lathiy teaches students in Trench 2.



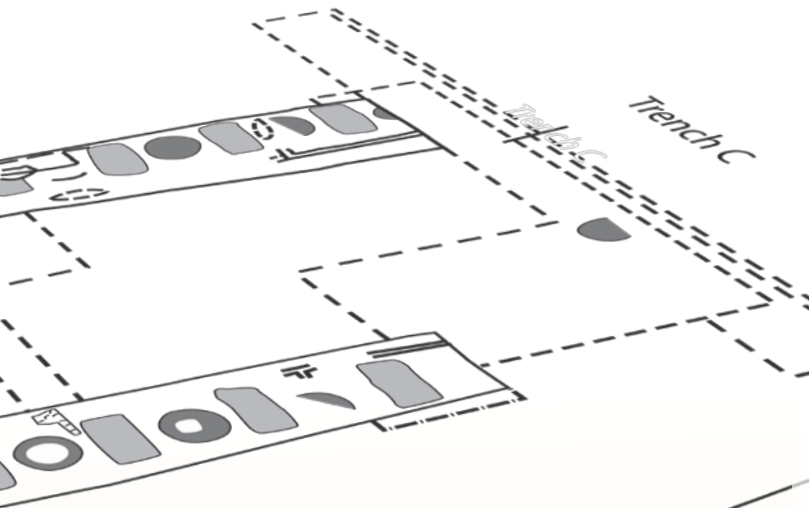
Yukinori Kawae

in Luxor!

SAFS Teacher Hanan Mamoud Mohamed works in Trench E.



Mark Lehner



Mark Lehner

Everyone pitches in to clear upper layers of silt in Operation C.

If on any day between January and March 2008 you wandered from the People's Ferry landing on the Nile into the heart of Luxor you might have passed the Khaled Ibn el-Waleed ("Khaled son of Waleed") Garden, a couple hundred meters from the front of the world-renown Luxor Temple. You could have peeked through the trees and shrubs to witness the largest archaeological mission anywhere in Egypt at that time: large white tents housing labs for illustrating and conserving ancient artifacts; a wooden tool shed with tripods, surveyors' theodolites, levels, tapes,

trowels, pick axes, shovels and wheel barrows; and maybe, at 10:30 am and again at 1:00 pm breakfast and lunch being catered for 100 people: workers, drivers, and archaeologists from Luxor and surrounding towns assisted by professional contract diggers, botanists, ceramicists, bioanthropologists, and surveyors from America, Britain, France,

Sweden, Japan, Poland, and Norway, all together pick-axing thick layers of silt, scraping delicate ancient floors of old Luxor with trowels and brushes, and sorting tens of thousands of pottery sherds from layers spanning more than two thousand years. You would have seen all these people working with a sense of pride, meaning, enthusiasm, and with a togetherness that surpassed any other excavation or field school session we at AERA have so far conducted.

You would have glimpsed the SAFS in action! The SAFS is the Salvage Archaeological Field School, a logical third extension of AERA's Beginners and Advanced Field Schools in Giza for inspectors of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA), in which we integrate teaching archaeology within our interdisciplinary excavations of the Lost City of the Pyramids. The Giza Field schools, which AERA runs with funding from USAID through the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), are certainly rigorous, but they take place within the protection and control of the Giza Plateau Mapping Project excavations. We compare this to teaching first aid and elective surgery. But then the students must return to their inspectorates throughout Egypt where they face drastic interventions from bulldozers, backhoes, and loaders into archaeological layers for making roads, tourist facilities, and urban development. These are archaeological battle fields. With the SAFS we took archaeological training into the real, workaday world of urgent, rescue archaeology in an urban setting.



Jason Quinlan

SAFS Supervisor Mohamed Hatem Ali Soliman tutors students in Trench C.



A sphinx base with inscription of Nectanebo I (380–362 BCE). (Photo by Yukinori Kawae)



A brick-lined tree pit. (Photo by Yukinori Kawae)

From Giza to Luxor

The story begins with an urgent plea from the SCA General Director of Luxor, Mansour Boraik, former Chief Inspector at Giza, good friend of AERA, and Field School Supervisor. He sent out a call for help with the rescue excavations launched in November 2005 along the Avenue of the Sphinxes. The famous avenue once ran the 2.7 kilometers between Luxor and Karnak Temples. One of the last native Egyptian pharaohs, Nectanebo I, lined the avenue with sandstone sphinxes on pedestals every 5 meters interspersed with trees.

A development plan of recent years for greater Luxor called for excavating much of the remainder of the avenue right through, and under modern Luxor, which sits upon many layers of ancient Thebes, one of the preeminent cities of the ancient world. Although Egyptologists have been excavating

and recording Karnak and Luxor Temple for nearly two centuries, there has been very little excavation of those parts of the city where people lived. Many opportunities for excavating and recording settlement have been lost. For instance, two thousand years of housing—Medieval Islamic to late Ptolemaic periods were removed from within, and in front of Luxor Temple in drastic clearings during the early 19th century and into the late 1950s. This clearing stopped just before reaching the Khaled Ibn el-Waleed Garden. Drastic digging began again in late 2005, with two huge trenches cut through the garden to expose the sphinxes. A world of systematic, scientific archaeology, especially for ancient settlements, has evolved since the 1950s. Knowing this, and having taught in the Field Schools, Mansour asked AERA and some of the graduates of the AERA Field Schools for help in early 2006.

The Salvage Archaeology Field School excavations. Luxor Temple is on the far left in the background. View to the southwest. (Photo by Mark Lehner)





SCA Supervisor Essam Shehab (center) instructs SAFS students Mohamed Naguib Reda Abd el-Kader (left) and Yasser Abd el-Razik Mahmoud on making preliminary sketch maps of the site before excavations begin.

To help with the urgent excavations we dispatched members of AERA's Rapid Response Team. Mohsen Kamel, Ana Tavares, Tim Stevens, James Taylor, and Freya Sadarangani worked with ARCE/AERA Field School graduates Moamen Saad, Tayeb Khodary, Amer Gad el-Karim, and Susan Sobhi Azeer along with Luxor-based inspectors from late March through October 2006 to document the evidence already exposed by the 2005 trenches and turn the excavations to more systematic methods of modern standard archaeological practice.

A New Field School Program

In the Spring of 2007 at the urging and encouragement of Dr. Gerry Scott, Director of the ARCE, and under the joint direction of Dr. Zahi Hawass and Dr. Mark Lehner, we began to plan for a field school that addressed real world SCA needs for salvage and rescue archaeology. This archaeological work would be carried out in the wake of—and hopefully in the future, in the advance of—drastic interventions into ancient Luxor by modern engineering for urban and tourist development, and conservation measures such as trenches for pipes and pumps to dewater the zones around Luxor's many ancient stone temples.

So, we conceived the fourth session of our field school for SCA inspectors as a new program in Luxor: the Salvage Archaeology Field School (SAFS). Dr. Gerry Scott arranged a substantial grant from ARCE's Egyptian Antiquities Conservation Project (EAC), funded by USAID, which covered a large share of the total cost of this ambitious project. AERA, thanks

to our many benefactors, covered a large cost share, as well as all survey and photographic equipment, and of course we also brought our experience with prior field schools at Giza.

For AERA, this was a tremendous redeployment in our budgeting and planning. We had already budgeted and planned another session of the Giza Advanced Field School to be set within an extensive excavation season. AERA now had to allocate energy, resources, and planning for hiring, lodging, and feeding up to 55 people for a period of three months of intensive, fast-paced archaeological excavation and recording in the heart of downtown Luxor, one of the busiest tourist destinations in the world.

The Team

Our SAFS class consisted of 25 SCA inspectors, organized into five teams, each with its own excavation area. While our first field school was staffed largely by Westerners, Egyptians have come to play an increasingly greater role with each succeeding program. The staff of the SAFS included 15 SCA inspectors, who served as instructors or assistants. In addition, they continued their own training with workshops on archiving data and writing reports. Each excavation/teaching unit was composed of one non-SCA teacher (foreign or Egyptian), one non-SCA archaeologist (foreign or Egyptian), two SCA teachers/archaeologists and five to six SCA students.

The 45 members of the SAFS team also included two photographers; a surveyor assisted by one SCA supervisor; an osteo-archaeologist, also assisted by an SCA supervisor; three ceramicists, two of whom are trained SCA supervisors; and a conservator. Four specialists—a conservator, an archaeological illustrator, an archaeobotanist, and an archaeozoologist—taught in their respective fields.

The Curriculum

Like our other field school programs, the SAFS emphasized the basics of standard, modern archaeological practice. We taught survey, systematic excavation and recording, retrieval and analysis of archaeological materials, storage of data, and report preparation. We added to this core program material specific to the needs of rescue work, such as assessing a site under threat and designing a project with time constraints and limited resources. We introduced students to ways of drawing together disparate information into a coherent whole that informs us about the lives of ancient people. Another aim of the field school was to instill an awareness that information is there to be retrieved, conserved, and recorded—or ignored, destroyed, and discarded—and that the information helps tell a story.

To accommodate the additional material for salvage work, the field school—previously an eight-week program—expanded



Members of Field School Unit 1 discuss their work in Trench B. Clockwise from lower left: Ayman Damarany, James Taylor, Mona Fathy, Mansour el-Badry, Essam Mahmoud, and Essam Shehab. (Photo by Jason Quinlan)



Members of Field School Unit 1 learn the basics of drawing pottery with SAFS teacher Will Schenk. Clockwise from lower left: Mansour el-Badry, Mona Fathy, Ezzat Abo Bakr, Will Schenk, and Yasser Mahmoud Hossein. (Photo by Jason Quinlan)

to twelve weeks: January 5th through March 27th. It included seven weeks of fieldwork, one full week of laboratory tutorials in material culture, and three weeks of work on a special topic that overlapped with the final two weeks dedicated to writing a report.

A Full Day, a Busy Week

Each SAFS team worked in its trench at the excavation site all morning. After lunch the students focused on paper work: feature forms, logs, drawings, etc. Late in the afternoon, they attended lectures given by our staff and visiting speakers. On Wednesdays, they themselves were the speakers, giving presentations on their own work. Friday was the only day off. On Saturdays the students took written exams. The five teams also rotated through the lab, learning the basics of illustration, conservation, ceramics, and the analysis of plant and animal remains.

Graduation and Beyond

On March 27th the students graduated in a ceremony held in the Luxor Mummification Museum. They were honored to receive their certificates from Sabri Abdel Aziz, Undersecretary of State and SCA Director of Pharaonic Sites and Monuments; Michael Jones, Director of the EAC program of ARCE; and Mark Lehner, Director of AERA.

We have left in Luxor a motivated and well trained pool of graduates and field school teachers who will be able to respond to urgent archaeological demands in the area and be able to make a real contribution to urban archaeology. They have the skills to carry out rescue work and an appreciation for the information that they can salvage.

With the SAFS and the other components of our field school program, we hope to have a long-term impact on Egyptian archaeology. Our goal is to offer training in the full range of skills that SCA inspectors need to save Egypt's past.

~ Mohsen Kamel & Ana Tavares, SAFS Co-Field Directors



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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2008 SAFS Students

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Mona Fathy Sayed
Yasser Abd el-Razik Mahmoud
Mohamed Naguib Reda Abd el-Kader
Ezzat Abo Bakr Saber
Nagwan Bahaa Fayez el-Hadidi
Saad Bakhit Abd el-Hafez
Emad Abdallah Abd el-Ghany

Omar Ahmed Abo Zaid
Hazem Salah Abdalla
Ahmed Hassan Ameen
Sayed Ahmed Sayed Ahmed Said
Ahmed Boghdady Ahmed
Hanem Sadeek Qnewy
Ayman Mohamed Damarany
Adel Abd el-Satar Mohamed

Amer Amin el-Hifny
Hussien Rikaby Hamed
Shimaa Montaser Abo el-Hagag
Ahmed Abd el-Raof Abd el-Rady
Shereen Ahmed Shawky
Hasan Ramadan Mahmoud
Mohamed Ahmed Abd el-Rahman
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Mohsen Kamel & Ana Tavares

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Will Schenck

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Photographer, Field School Teacher
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The 2008 SAFS team: students and staff. (Photo by Mark Lehner)

